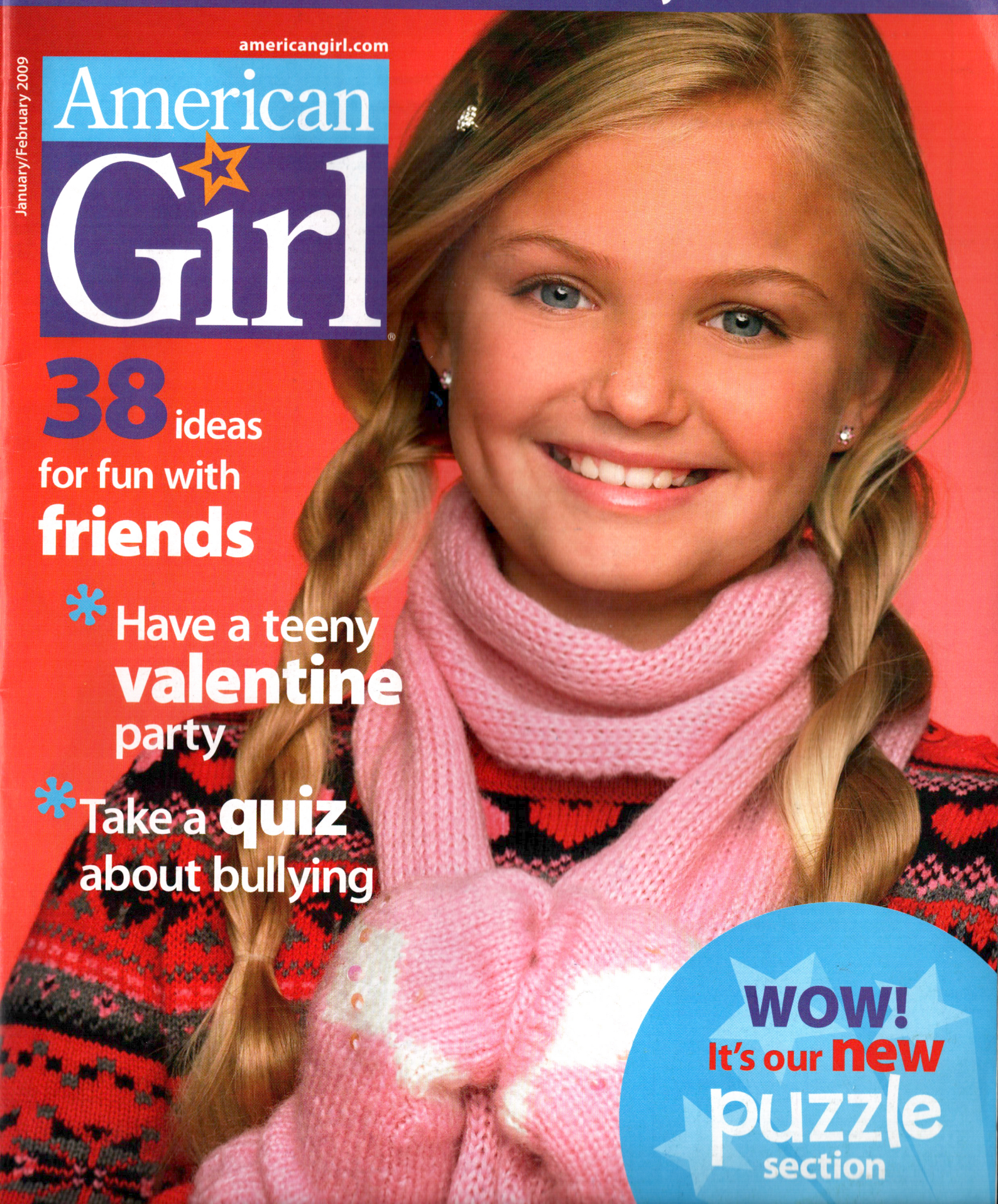
2 Sweet Posters You'll Love ★ 26 Funny Fortunes to Share

January/February 2009

americangirl.com

American Girl®



38 ideas for fun with **friends**

* Have a teeny **valentine** party

* Take a **quiz** about bullying

WOW! It's our **new** **puzzle** section

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B. Paid circulation		
1. Paid/requested circ. mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541	534,421	497,627
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3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	50,497	53,153
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	61	57
C. Total paid distribution	584,979	550,837
D. Free distribution		
1. Outside-county stated on Form 3541	390	398
2. In-county stated on Form 3541	787	1,026
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10% post-consumer waste

Volume 17, Number 1

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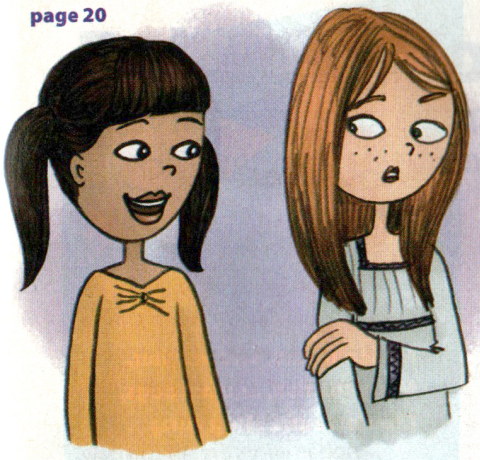




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Wow
Look in the middle of the magazine for little fortunes to use at your party!



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Plus Funny Little Fortunes



Win an American girl cap and a copy of *Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends*. To enter, send a postcard by February 16, 2009, with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—J/F 2009
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by February 16, 2009. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
A parent or guardian must sign the entry.
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Girls Express has a new look!

Girls EXPRESS

Truly Lovable

Here's a list of sweet, wonderful, *imperfect* things we love:

A glove that has a hole in the fingertip ♥ Home movies of old dance recitals ♥ Teeth with braces ♥ An old backpack ♥ Lumpy mashed potatoes and gravy ♥ Bed head after a slumber party ♥ Snorting when you mean to laugh ♥

A handmade card ♥ Pizza with really stringy cheese ♥ Old blankets with frayed edges ♥ Your karaoke singing voice ♥ A slightly melty snowman ♥ A notebook that's filled with writing and doodles ♥ A book tattered from being read and re-read ♥

Dad's bad jokes ♥ The teddy bear that you've had since you were a baby ♥ Holey jeans ♥ A funny knick-knack that used to belong to your grandma ♥ Too-toasted marshmallows ♥ Old sneakers ♥ A goofy photo of you and your best friend ♥

Meet an AG Reader



Alice C.
Age 11, Texas

I live with:
My mom, dad, and brother, Misty the fish, and my dogs, Charlotte and Ming Ming

Words my friends would use to describe me:
Fun, happy, organized

My favorite snack:
Cheesy goldfish crackers

Something no one would guess about me:
I've lived in lots of places all over the country.

A time I laughed so hard I could hardly breathe:
The time my brother decided to make up his own cartwheel. It was so weird!

My favorite spot in my house:
My room. I love sitting in my window seat or reading a book in my reading corner.

In 20 years, I'll be:
An author or architect

My favorite part of AG:
The story section—like I said, I love to read!

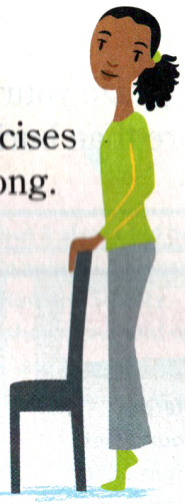
Introduce Yourself!

To find out how you could be a featured reader, go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls."

Illustrations: Tracey Wood

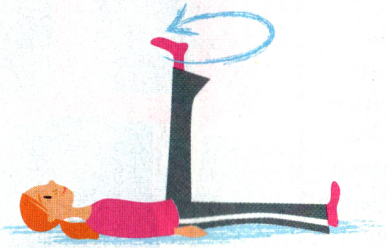
Ballet at Home

Try these easy dance-inspired exercises to make your muscles long and strong.



Round and Round

Lie down with your back flat on the floor. Raise your right leg straight up and slowly use your heel to draw four large circles in the air, and then circle in the other direction. Use your abdominal muscles to hold your lower back to the floor, and don't let your back lift up as you circle your leg. Breathe. Bend your leg as you put it back on the ground. Repeat with your left leg.



Slow and Steady

With your hands resting lightly on the back of a chair, stand with your heels touching. Rise slowly up onto your tiptoes, hold for a few seconds, and then lower your heels slowly to the floor. Stand up *super* straight when you do this—as if your head were a balloon floating up from your body. Repeat ten times, or more as you get stronger.

Gotcha Covered

Check out Ana's version of last year's January/February cover:



Ana F.
Age 12, Virginia



Laffateria

Make us laugh! Send your best joke to the address on page 7.

Why are there so many Smiths in the phone book?



Because they all have phones

Allyson L.
Age 12, Illinois

What did the traffic signal say to the cars?



Don't look—I'm changing!

Varsha G.
Age 11, Georgia

What can you serve but not eat?



A volleyball

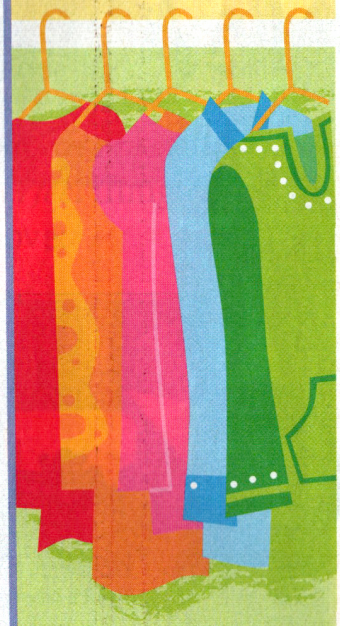
Jasmine S.
Age 11, California

Shopping—in Your Closet!

Organize your closet to be more like a fun store than boring storage.

Get It Straight

Group clothing by type—shirts with shirts, pants with pants, and so on. Hang all of your shirts so that they're facing the same way.



Organize

Label the different sections of your closet. Make small signs out of heavy paper, and ask a parent to attach them to shelves with tape. Also, try storing solid-color T-shirts in a crate, with the shirts rolled and stacked so that you can see all of them at once.

Decorate!

Ask a parent to help you cover your shelves in colorful paper or fabric. Display necklaces on hooks. Cover empty boxes with colorful paper and use them to store items such as hats or purses and tote bags.

Favorite Friday

On a Sunday night, pick an outfit that makes you feel happy and confident. Hang the outfit in a way that shows it off. You'll be inspired all week until Friday—when you wear it!

On Board

Tear out magazine and catalog pictures and use them to make a collage of looks you like. Hang it up so you can use it as inspiration when choosing outfits.









Shining Star

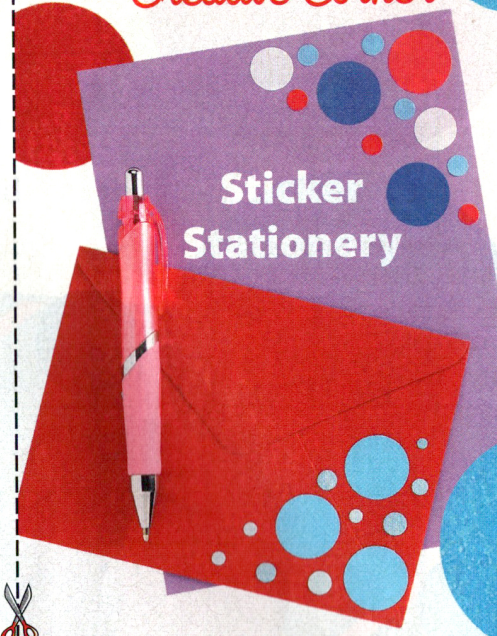
Alexandra F. loves her dog, Reggie. She got the golden retriever as a puppy, and she and her family raised Reggie to be very well behaved. Alexandra's friends were always asking how she had managed to train Reggie so well, and that gave the 11-year-old Wisconsin girl an idea. She decided to write a book teaching people how to train and care for new puppies—and she would give money from book sales to her local Humane Society. "I felt that this book would not only help people train their pets, but it also could be used to help animals," Alexandra says. "The Humane Society has always shown love and care for animals, and I wanted to give them some help in any way I could."

Writing the book took an entire summer. With help from her dad, Alexandra spent hours doing research and writing. Since the book was published, she has been able to give more than $1,000 to help animals at her local Humane Society. "It made me feel so good to help," she says.



You can shine, too. Ask a parent to find out about ways to volunteer at your local animal shelter.

Creative Corner



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.



AG Poll

Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

What's your favorite thing to do to relax?

- Surf the Internet
- Take a bubble bath
- Read a book
- Listen to music

What's your favorite thing to bake?

- Brownies
- Cupcakes
- A cake
- Cookies

American Girl Sticker Stationery

Circular stickers can help you to create your own personalized stationery. Use stickers of different sizes to make designs on colored paper and envelopes. Each piece will be unique!

Reader Recipe



Emily's Peanut-Chocolate "Cookie"

Emily C.
Age 13, Missouri

Spread **peanut butter** on two **buttery crackers,** and push them together like a sandwich. Ask an adult to microwave a small handful of **chocolate chips** until melted. Dip the cracker sandwiches halfway into the chocolate, and add **sprinkles.** Chill cookie on wax paper in the fridge, and then enjoy!



Send your yummy—and easy!—recipes to the address on page 7.

AG Poll

What girls told us at americangirl.com:



To relax, girls like to:

47% Read a book

18% Listen to music

18% Take a bubble bath

17% Surf the Internet



When baking, girls prefer:

44% Cookies

25% Brownies

21% A cake

10% Cupcakes

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls."

True Story

Laura didn't worry when the lights went out—until they didn't come back on.



Dear American Girl,

One day a few years ago, a snowstorm that started as we sat in social studies class got worse and worse, until everything outside was white. That night, just as my favorite TV show was about to start, the power went out.

My family decided to sleep downstairs by the fire to stay warm. When I woke up, I was surprised to see that the power still hadn't come back on. We didn't have school that day, or the next day—or the next! Power was out all over town for three entire days, and for some homes, it was even longer than that. I spent a lot of time with my family, playing games and doing other things to pass the time.

Now, when we're in social studies learning about the original American colonies and how families used to sit in front of their fireplaces every night, our teacher will say, "Well, you all know what that's like!"



Sincerely,

Laura W.
Age 14, New York



AG Art Gallery

Readers took their best shots—and sent them to us.

Fill our gallery by sending **artwork** or **photos** to the address below. Sorry, we can't return entries.



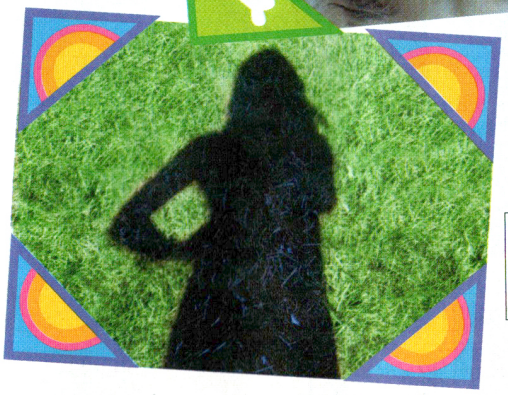
Juliana N.
Age 10, Illinois





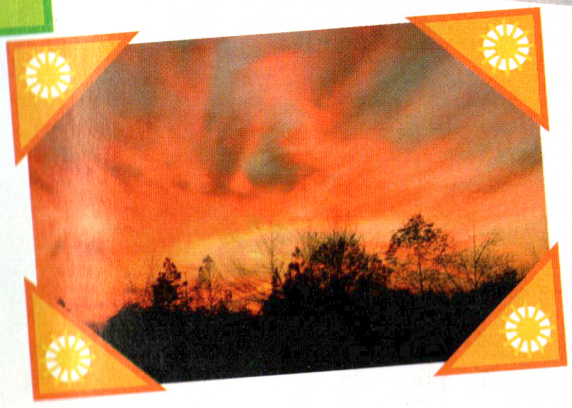
Breana F.
Age 14, Arizona







Abigail S.
Age 12, Ohio





Emily C.
Age 12, Mississippi

Short & Sweet

Make someone's day with a small act of kindness.

Make a parent's day by having some change. If you're going somewhere that will involve paying tolls or parking meters, visit your family's change jar before you get into the car. Your parents will be totally impressed when they realize that you have the exact coins needed for the day's adventure.

Send us your **ideas** for little acts that get **big thanks.** Write to the address at the right.

Write to us!





Envelope art by:
Katie C.
Age 13, Wisconsin

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

Be sure to include your

- **First and last name**
- **Address and phone number**
- **Birth date, including year**
- **School photo or snapshot**

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! ★

Lovely Poetry

These girls wrote sweet haiku poems about the people, places, and things that they love.

A haiku (hy-koo) is a poem that has five syllables in the first line, seven in the second line, and five in the third line.

Sweet, soft, black and white,
Always happy to see me.
I love my puppy!



Libby M.
Age 11, Georgia

Writing is my life.
All my thoughts turn into words.
Imagination.



Kathleen L.
Age 12, Ohio

Seeing a great film,
Salty, buttery popcorn—
I love the movies!



Riley S.
Age 12, Ohio

We laugh and giggle.
Whispers float across the dark.
Sleepovers with friends.



Carmen-Marie C.
Age 12, Wisconsin

What do I adore?
Something sweeter than candy—
My grandmother's hug.



Michelle Z.
Age 11, New Jersey

Asleep in my arms,
Snuggled up on my shoulder,
My baby brother.



Colleen H.
Age 12, Nebraska

Leaping gracefully,
I fly like a bird in air.
Dance is my passion.



Kelsey R.
Age 10, Missouri

Who is kind and true?
Caring, bright, and funny, too?
Phoebe, my best friend.



Yvette S.
Age 11, Florida

New Contest: Flip-Flops

Get into the spirit of summer and draw a pair of flip-flops you'd love to wear! Maybe your flip-flops would be covered in brightly colored tropical flowers. Perhaps they would show a scene from your favorite book. Or your sandals might be covered with stars and resemble the night sky. Send your flip-flop drawing to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, birth date, and school photo. Deadline: February 10, 2009. Winners will appear in the July/August 2009 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.



Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

Being Brave

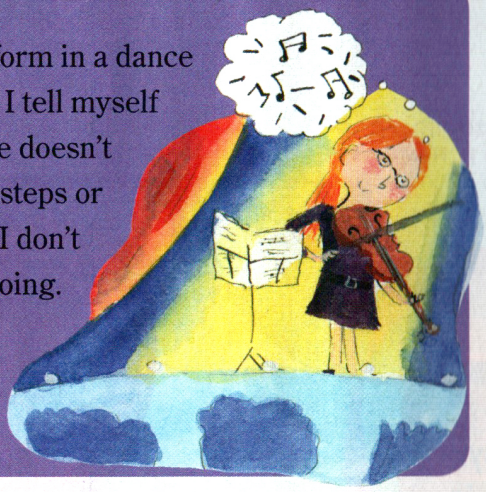
How do you find strength in challenging situations? These girls share their best tips.





Whenever I perform in a dance or music recital, I tell myself that the audience doesn't know the dance steps or notes. So if I make a mistake, I don't stop or freak out. I just keep going.

Deborah W.
Age 9, Massachusetts





I always pack a stuffed animal in my bag for a gymnastics competition. At my first meet, I was afraid my teammates would make fun of me because I brought a stuffed animal. But then I noticed that almost every girl on the team brought a stuffed animal! After that, I relaxed and just concentrated on gymnastics.

Elizabeth M.
Age 10, Texas





I tend to get nervous way too often. One day when I was on vacation, I decided to buy a "worry stone." It said that whenever you feel worried, rub the stone and it will calm you down. Amazingly enough, it really works for me.

Autumn S.
Age 13, Pennsylvania



When I feel nervous about something, such as when I'm on a scary ride or studying for a big math test, I have found that singing a song to myself helps a lot. Somehow, singing is what helps me to be strong.

Janae S.
Age 12, Florida



Every time that I get upset about something, I make a list. For every bad thing I can think of, I think of at least two good things. This helps me realize that things aren't that bad.

Brianna T.
Age 13, Washington

Big Truth

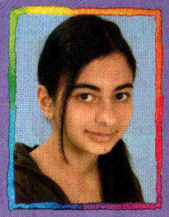
You are stronger than you think.



There is one thing that always cheers me up when I'm faced with a hard situation. I talk to my dog when I'm upset. I know she can't talk back to me, but just seeing her cute face somehow makes me feel stronger inside.

Ali S.
Age 11, Oklahoma





I was the main character in my school's play. At the first performance, I was scared. Then I saw my mom and sister in the audience, and my nerves went away. Their presence made me feel strong.

Shokoofeh M.
Age 13, Canada



A good friend gave me a beautiful pink bracelet. I wear this bracelet every day. When I am faced with peer pressure at school, I look at the bracelet and it gives me the strength to make good choices.

Alexa D
Age 10, New Jersey

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Silly summer stories. What's your funniest summer moment? Maybe you didn't realize that a lime popsicle turned your lips bright green. At camp, maybe you fell asleep in the wrong cabin. At a theme park, perhaps your mom made your whole family wear matching tie-dyed T-shirts. Make us laugh!

Send your answer, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 7. Deadline: February 10, 2009. Some answers will appear in the July/August 2009 issue. ★



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Sisters with **Heart**



Meet three girls who will do anything to help their brothers.



Sam helps Patrick with little things, such as tying his shoelaces.

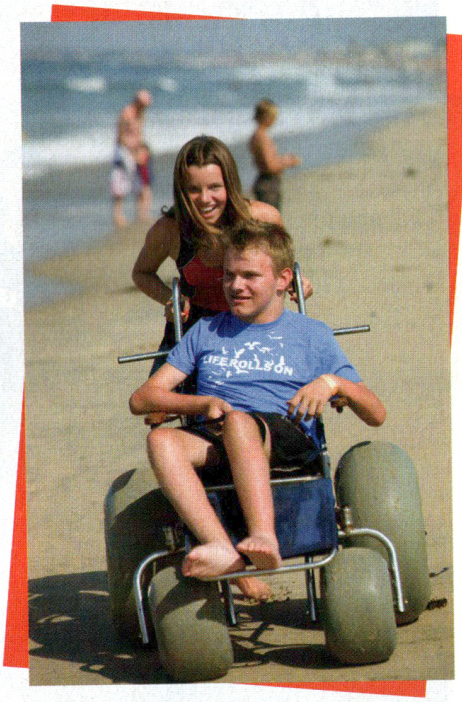
Supporting Patrick

Patrick was one year old when his accident happened. A car hit him, and he was badly hurt. Patrick, now 14, grew up unable to walk, and he uses a wheelchair to get around. But his sister, Sam, is always there to lend a hand. "I help him with anything he needs—picking things up, helping him get up the ramp in front of our house, helping him into chairs," Sam says. Still, Patrick doesn't let his injury get in his way. He plays wheelchair basketball and rugby, and he even surfs using special equipment.

But one day several years ago, Sam's family learned of a therapy center that could work with Patrick. The people at the center could help Patrick get stronger—and maybe even help him learn to walk again. Sam and her family began raising money right away, because it would cost about $90,000 for several years of therapy for Patrick.

Over the years, the family has held bowling tournaments, yard sales, and other events to raise money. Sam, age 11, has always been right there to pitch in. "I help make all the flyers because I know how to do graphics on the computer, and on the days of the events, I'll probably be selling raffle tickets," Sam says. And her efforts haven't only helped Patrick. After visiting a hospital to see Patrick one time, Sam saw how much better a stuffed animal made him feel. Sam organized a drive at her California school to collect toys for other kids in hospitals, hoping to make their stays a little less scary.

Patrick has been going to the therapy center for several years, and he has made a lot of progress. Using special equipment, he now can walk for several minutes at a time—with weights on his ankles! Patrick will keep working toward his goal of being more independent, and through it all, Sam will be there to do whatever it takes to support him. "I'll always be his cheerleader," she says.



Photos: Walter Urie

Celebrating Kaeden

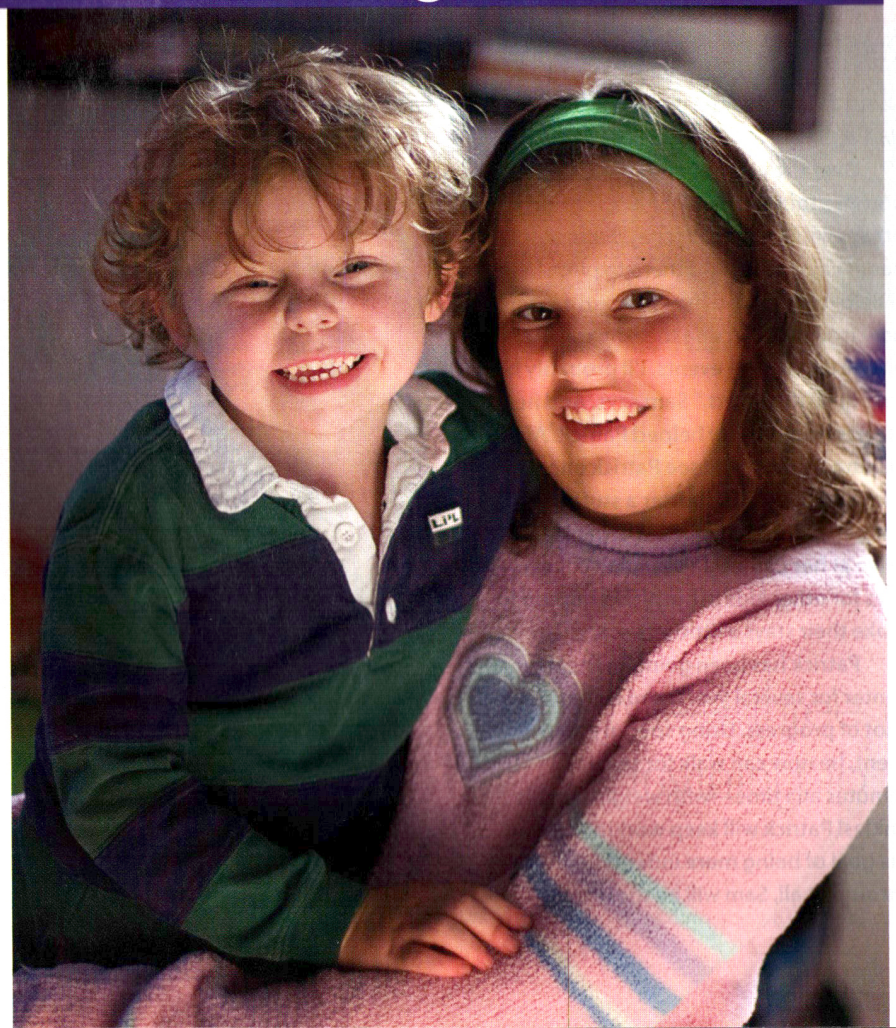
Kennedy K. remembers that it was a scary time right after her brother, Kaeden, was born. Kaeden had a hole in his tiny heart, along with other problems. Seeing her newborn brother in the hospital, hooked up to tubes and machines, wasn't easy for Kennedy. "Kaeden had three surgeries in the first year of his life," the Pennsylvania girl explains. "It was hard. I was so worried and sad for him." But Kennedy was by her little brother's side the whole time.

While she was visiting the hospital with her own family, Kennedy met other families who also had children with heart problems. She found out that many of them didn't have enough money to pay their huge hospital bills. That's when Kennedy got an idea for how to celebrate Kaeden's first birthday. "We had a party where people brought donations instead of gifts," Kennedy says. "We raised $2,000 and gave it to the hospital to help needy families."

The success of that event inspired Kennedy, now 11, to start her own charity. Named in honor of her brother, it's called Kisses for Kaeden. Every year, with the help of other kids, parents, and community members, the group holds an auction to raise money for children's health care. The group also hosts other events such as bake sales, lemonade stands, and money drives to raise funds to help children with heart problems.

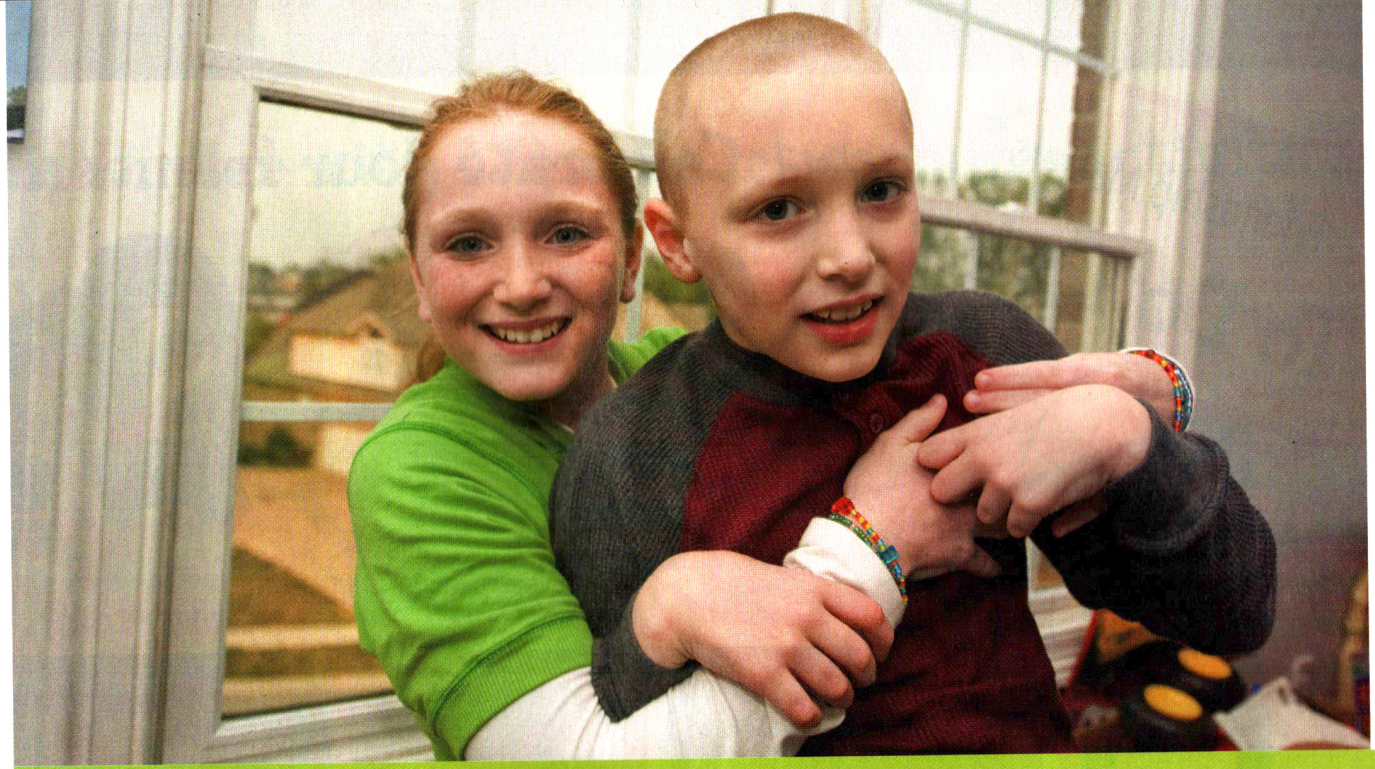
Today, Kaeden is five, and Kennedy loves him so much. "He's my hero—he's always so happy and has a crazy laugh and is the best hugger," she says. But Kaeden won't be able to play contact sports such as football, and he will continue to need medical help for his heart condition. "I just hope my friends' families realize how blessed they are to have healthy children," Kennedy says.

So far, Kisses for Kaeden has raised $71,000. Kennedy plans to raise even more money to help kids and families in need, and she says she's grateful to Kaeden for inspiring her. "Giving and helping others feels really, really good. I think anyone who wants to start her own volunteer organization should do it—just because you're young or small doesn't mean you can't," Kennedy says. "Get your parents to help you, ask your friends, reach out to the community. You really can make a difference."





Photos: Chris Hartlove



Helping **Evan**

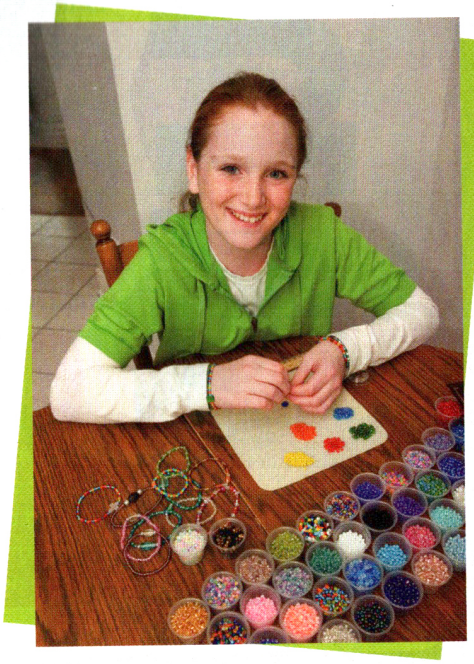
Life isn't always easy at Michala R.'s house. Her little brother, Evan, has *autism*, a disorder that makes it difficult for him to communicate and control himself. Michala and her family have a difficult time understanding Evan's needs and feelings because he can't tell them what he's thinking. And in the past, Evan wouldn't react when someone spoke his name, or else he would get angry unexpectedly and act out.

But things have changed since eight-year-old Evan started getting a new kind of medical treatment. "Evan doesn't have as many temper tantrums these days," says Michala, age 12. "Now, if I call his name, he looks at me. He has learned to dress himself, and unlike before, he laughs and plays."

Autism is hard to treat because doctors don't understand it very well, and it affects each person differently. Doctors wanted to figure out whether the treatment that had worked so well for Evan could help other kids, too. When Michala heard her parents saying that the hospital needed $200,000 for autism research, she wanted to help. She started making bracelets with colorful beads. She sold them for $3 each, and she called her effort Beading to Beat Autism.

Michala's relatives helped to sell her bracelets at their workplaces and other spots. But soon, word of the project spread, and suddenly it seemed as if everyone wanted to buy bracelets. Michala couldn't make them fast enough, so she started handing out kits of supplies so that others could help. Bracelet sales brought in lots of money, and Michala got some big cash donations, too. In just six months, she reached her goal of raising $200,000! The money made it possible for doctors to learn more about the treatment that helped Evan—which might mean that they can help other kids, too.

Michala appeared on national television to talk about her success, and the governor of Kentucky honored her with an award. Bracelet sales soared. In addition to the first $200,000, Michala has raised $100,000 more. She's now working on a plan to raise $300 million to fund an autism center in her hometown. It's a big task, but Michala is confident. "If you know you can achieve your goal, then you will," she says. "My motto is, 'You gotta believe.'" ★



Photos: David Harpe

Friendship Matters

To Do Today

January

Celebrate your friendships



Sunday

It's Trivia Day. Learn trivia facts about your friends! Each girl writes down her favorite color, vacation spot, animal, etc. Collect the papers and read them aloud. Guess who wrote each answer.

4

Monday

Using pretty paper, make a card for your friend. Write a sweet thought about friendship on the front (for example, "Life is special with friends like you.").

5

Tuesday

Make a word off-limits with your friends today. Pick one that you all say a lot, such as "like." If someone says it, whoever catches her gets a point. The girl with the most points at the end of the day wins.

6



Gather your friends today and decorate plain cupcakes with frosting and candy.

12



Make one to represent each of you!

13



Today, send a super-long e-mail to a long-distance friend.

18

Make a memory box. Cover the lid and each side of a small box with patterned paper. Add friend photos and rhinestones. Put friendship mementos inside!



20

It's **Get Organized Month.** With a parent's permission, ask a friend to help organize your room. She can offer her organization ideas, and then you can work on them together. Help her do her room, too!

25



27

this winter with these heartwarming activities.



Thursday

1

It's **New Year's Day!** Make it a goal this month to meet someone new. Break the ice by giving her a compliment or asking her what her favorite movies are.

Friday

2

Make up a tongue twister with a buddy, such as "Faye and Fiona are fabulously fantastic friends." Say it three times fast!

Saturday



10

Today, make up silly, secret nicknames that you and your friend can call each other.

Wednesday

7

Make a snack mix with friends. Each girl brings a sweet or salty treat. Add treats to a bowl and stir. Divide the mix into small bags so that each girl can take some home.



9

Make this notebook for school. Decorate the cover with photos of your buds. Add cute stickers, ribbon, rhinestones, or words cut from magazines.



14

To celebrate **National Hugging Day**, give your best friend a BIG hug today.

21

International Creativity Month!

Get creative with your friend and describe your dream lives to each other. Cut pictures from magazines and make collages of what your dream lives would be like.

16

Host board-game night! Each friend brings a board game. Assemble into groups, each playing a board game for ten minutes. When time's up, rotate to the next game.

23

Create a magazine with your friends. Have each girl act as a different editor (food, entertainment, news, etc.) and write about the fun things you do together.



31

Make a fun portrait of your friend's pet. Sign it, and then frame it so that she can hang it in her room.

28

Play this game with a group. Write the names of famous friends (such as Samantha and Nellie) on slips of paper. Tape a name to each girl's back. Ask only yes-or-no questions to find your friendship partner.

29

Make "two peas in a pod" bracelets. String a green bead (the "pea") on elastic cording and knot the ends to make a bracelet.

Wear one and give one to a friend!

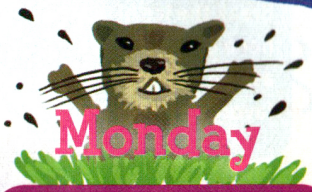
Illustrations: Cathi Mingus

Friendship Matters

To Do Today

February





Sunday



Make a friendship pillow. Using a small throw pillow, have each of your friends write her name in colorful fabric paint. Let dry and then display on your bed.

8

Monday

Happy Groundhog Day! Be like the groundhog and make three predictions for a friend's future. Read them out loud and make her giggle!

2

Tuesday

Ask Mom if you can trade lunches with a friend. Pack your favorite things and switch with a pal!

3



Think of a fun sign-off to use with your friend when talking online. Make it a secret code that only she would know (for example, BABFF: Bella and Blair, Friends Forever).

10

Today at lunch, have a dessert potluck with friends. Each girl should bring along a favorite dessert. Be sure to bring enough for everyone to share!

16



Fighting with a friend? Give her a "friendship repair kit." In a small box, include a bandage to "patch things up," a piece of candy to show that your friendship is "sweet," an eraser to rub out mistakes, and an "I'm sorry" note explaining what each object means.



22

Make friendship coupons. On sheets of paper, make coupons of nice things you will do for your friend (for example, "Good for one movie night at my house!").

23

Send a silly note from your pet to your friend's pet in the mail. "Hi, Fluffy! How are you? I've been busy eating treats and playing with my squeaky toy. See you soon! Love, Fido."

24



Wednesday

Write an acrostic for a friend. Take each letter of her name and list her best qualities.

Smart
Amazing
Real
A true friend!

5

Thursday

Today, lend CDs to a friend and borrow some from her to learn about what kind of music she likes. You could discover a new band that you'll like, too.

6

Friday

Using a photo of you and your friends, cut out paper speech bubbles and put them above each girl's head. Add funny quotes.

7

Saturday

Write a poem about an animal friend—your dog, cat, hamster, fish, etc. Read it aloud to your family—and your pet!

Make friendship cookies. Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out cookies from a roll of ready-made dough. Split each cookie down the middle with a butter knife. After baking and cooling, use frosting to make a "B" on one half and an "F" on the other, like a best-friend necklace.

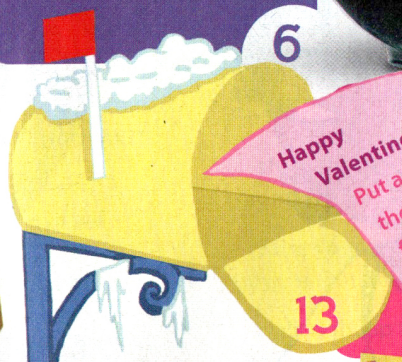


18



Have a clothes swap with a same-size friend. Each of you brings clothes that you don't want anymore (ask your moms first). Her old clothes will seem like new to you.

19



13

Happy Valentine's Day! Put a nice note in the mail to a faraway friend. Say "I'm thinking of you!" across the miles.

14

Cheer up a friend with a sweet note of encouragement. Leave it in her backpack.



Draw a portrait of your friend. Present it to her in a pretty picture frame!

21

Pass around an autograph book among friends. Tell them to write their fanciest signatures.

Tory
Jade
Lily...

25



Have a dance party at your house today! Invite friends over to dance to fun, upbeat music. ★

28

by Patti Kelley Criswell

Speak Up or Steer Clear?

Do you stand up for yourself and others, or do you avoid conflict—even if it means getting stepped on? Circle the responses that suit you, and then turn the page to find your speak-up style.



1. A boy trips and drops his lunch tray. You try to help, but your friend grabs your arm and tells you not to. You...



a. stay seated, but you give the boy a kind look.

b. pull your arm away and say to your friend, "Someone has to help him. I'd help if it were you."

c. say to your friend, "What's your problem? You're so mean!"



2. Caitlyn tells all the girls in your class to wear pink on Wednesday—all the girls except for Lauren. You've been told not to tell Lauren. So you...

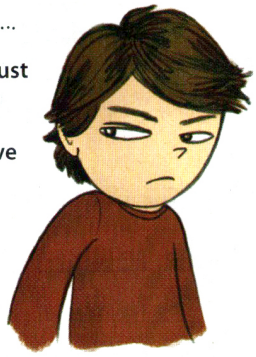


a. feel bad for Lauren, but you mind your own business.

b. decide that you don't want to be part of hurting someone's feelings. You wear green the next day.

c. secretly try to convince the others to wear green like you. That way Caitlyn will feel left out instead.

3. While you're waiting in the lunch line, a classmate comes up, gives you a dirty look, and cuts in front of you. You...



a. do nothing. It's just not worth it.

b. say, "You could've asked. I would've let you in."

c. say, "Hey, jerk! What do you think you're doing?"

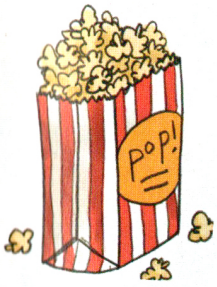
4. A girl on the playground asks you a personal question. You don't trust her. You respond by saying...

a. "I dunno," and make a quick exit.

b. "I'm not sure why you're asking me. It's pretty personal, don't you think?"

c. "That's none of your business. And I wouldn't tell you even if we *were* friends."

5. Every Friday is popcorn day at school. A girl in your class expects you to give her some quarters to get a bag of popcorn. You say...



a. nothing. After all, you've been giving her money for a few weeks in a row, and you don't want to hurt her feelings.

b. "I wanted to give you the heads-up that I don't have extra quarters."

c. "I'm tired of you using me. Don't you have your own money?"

6. Puppies are your absolute most favorite thing in the world. Everyone knows it. One day, a girl in your class forms a "puppy club," but she says that you can't join. You...



a. shrug your shoulders and find someone else to play with.

b. say, "That's O.K. I wouldn't want to be in a club that excludes people, anyway."

c. say, "No problem. I'll start my own club and invite everyone but you."

7. Two girls in your class are looking at you, whispering and giggling. You know they are making fun of you. So you...

a. show them how hurt you feel, but you say nothing.

b. raise your eyebrows and say, "C'mon, guys. Is that necessary?"

c. walk right up to them and say, "What's the matter? Are you too scared to say that to my face?"



Turn the page for answers.

Illustrations: Angela Martini

Answers

If you circled mostly a's

You try your best to steer clear of trouble, even if it means not getting the things you want. Sometimes your easy, breezy style works well for you. Other times, you might end up feeling like a doormat because you let people walk all over you. Finding your voice and letting others know how you feel is your challenge. Work harder to be heard.

If you circled mostly b's

You know how to tell people what's on your mind, while at the same time considering the feelings of others around you. People will admire your approach to problems and appreciate the honesty and kindness that you bring to problem solving.

If you circled mostly c's

You have no trouble telling people how you feel, and nobody is going to stomp on you—that's for sure. The trouble is, you might be pushing people away. You won't gain respect if you don't watch out for other people's feelings. Stay strong, but work on your approach.

How to Speak Up

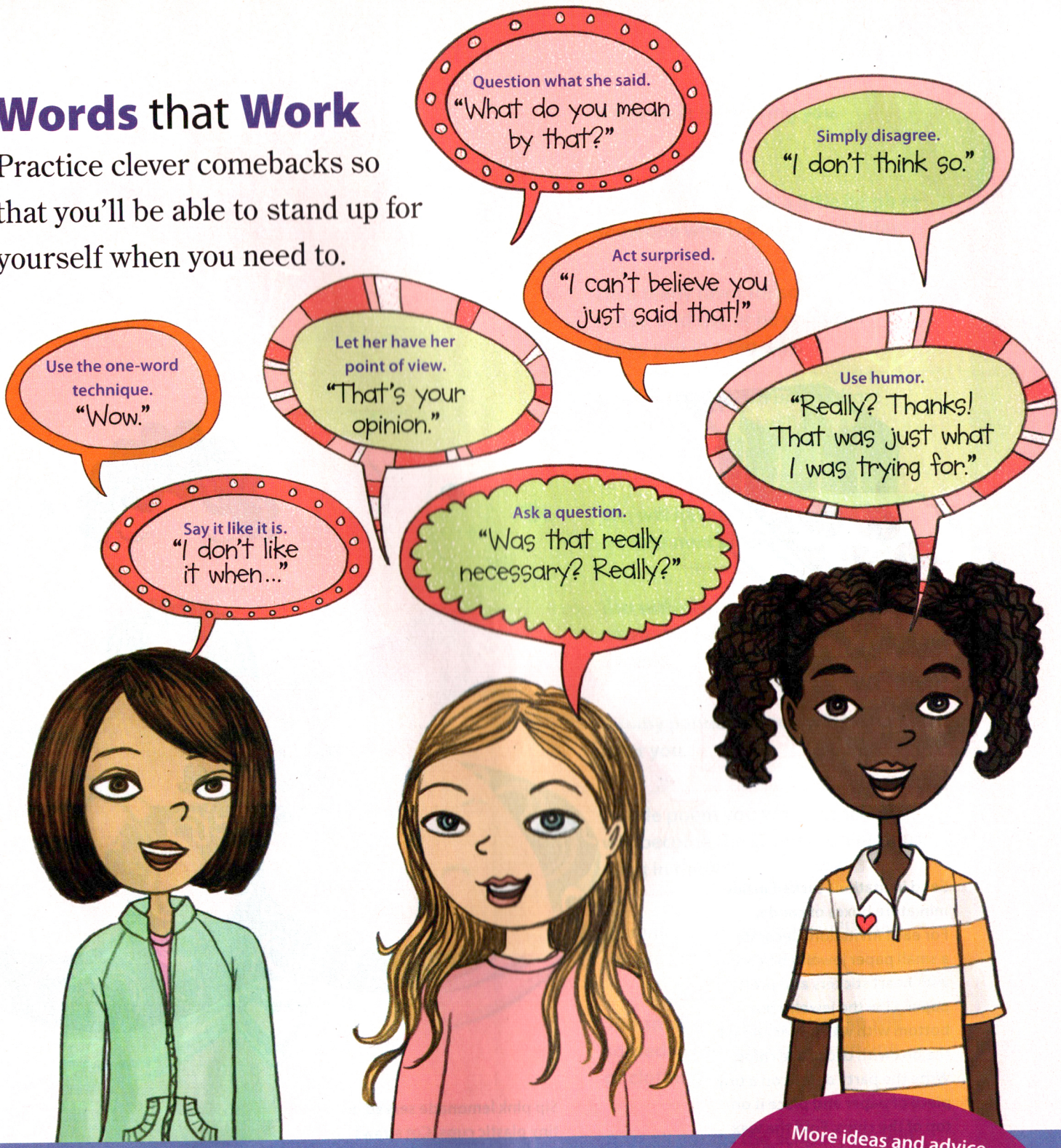


Girls have lots of reasons for not standing up for themselves. But staying quiet doesn't always work, and getting in someone's face or talking behind her back isn't the answer. There's a better way.

It's called being **assertive.** It's the halfway point between being a pushover and being a bully. Here's how it works: you let the person know that you are not O.K. with the bullying, but you do it in a way that isn't mean and doesn't keep the fighting going.

Words that **Work**

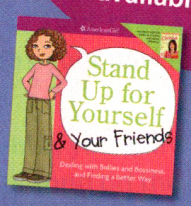
Practice clever comebacks so that you'll be able to stand up for yourself when you need to.



BIG Truth

You have a right to defend yourself, and there are smart ways to do it. Just be sure that you speak up in a way that solves problems and doesn't create more. ✦

More ideas and advice about how to speak up and stop bullying can be found in *Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends*, available in bookstores.



VALEN-TINY PARTY



Itty-Bitty Invitations

Send invitations tucked inside miniature boxes of candy. For each invitation, decorate a small paper jewelry box lid with heart stickers and pretty paper. Line the jewelry box bottom with wax paper and fill the box with chocolate chips. Write the party details on a tiny piece of paper and place it on top of the chips. Fold the wax paper over and replace the lid. Tie a thin ribbon around the box.

Pixie Punch

Sip pink lemonade served in tiny plastic cups. Cut straws down to size. Cut a large napkin into squares to make tiny napkins for your guests.

Funny Little Fortunes

Cut out the fortunes between pages 24 and 25. Tape fortunes to the sticks of lollipops. Let each of your guests pick her favorite color of lollipop and read her fortune out loud!

Your friends will love these petite sweets and teeny-tiny activities.



Teeny Tasties

Ask an adult to help you cut a prepackaged box of chocolate or strawberry Swiss cake rolls into mini slices. Stick a colored toothpick into each slice. For petit fours, ask an adult to help you cut sugar wafers into squares. Add a tiny dollop of colored frosting to each square. Top with a single heart-shaped sprinkle.

Candy Kabobs

Slide mini marshmallows, gummy candy, and candy with holes in the middle onto toothpicks. Let your guests pick their favorites.

Dainty Dippers

Stick colored toothpicks into mini marshmallows. Set up a few bowls with different kinds of colored frostings, sprinkles, and colored sugar crystals. Guests can dip their marshmallows into their choice of frostings and then into the sprinkles or sugar.



Loony Spoons

The goal is to be the team that gets the most candy into a cup in 1 minute. The catch is that you can only use spoons to pass the candy. Each team forms a line, and starts with a full cup of candy hearts at one end of their line and an empty cup at the other. Set a timer. On "Go!" teams begin to pass the candies. You can pass more than one candy at a time, but if a candy falls to the floor, you can't pick it up!

Cute Cakes

Use circle cookie cutters (one small and one medium) to cut circles from brownies. Stack a small circle on top of a medium circle for each cake. Share them with your guests and let them decorate with frosting, icing, candy, and sprinkles!

Dinky Deck

Play Hearts or your favorite game of cards with a store-bought miniature deck of cards. Or make your own pint-sized playing cards from regular-sized cards. Cut one corner from each card (a corner with the suit and the number).

Tiny Treats

These crafty cupcakes are cute! Each girl needs one round paper box (available at craft stores), 2 colors of felt, a marker, a red pom-pom, fabric glue, and scissors.

1. To make the "frosting," trace around the lid of the box onto a piece of felt with a marker. Cut out the circle and glue it to the top of the box.

2. Cut three smaller felt circles. Attach the stack of circles to the lid with a dot of fabric glue in the center of each circle.

3. Cut a strip of felt to fit around the edge of the lid. Put the lid on the box, and then glue the strip to the edge.

4. To make the cupcake "wrapper," cut felt to fit around the side of the box. Make sure the lid is on the box when you measure this. Glue the felt to the edge of the box. Finish by gluing a pom-pom "cherry" on top, and let dry. Yum! ★

Wee Words

This game will satisfy your sweet tooth! Before the party, make a grid of nine squares, as shown, for each player. To start, each player puts a candy conversation heart (word side up) on each square of her grid. One girl is the caller. The caller picks a candy heart out of a bowl and reads it out loud. For example, she might pick "Be Mine." Any player who has a "Be Mine" heart on her grid takes it off and eats it. The first player to clear a line across, diagonally, or down wins.



Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

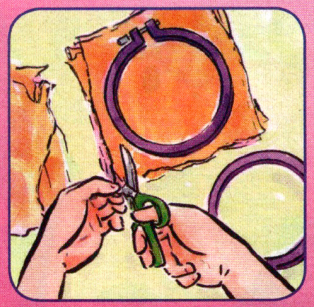
Craft

Earring Keeper

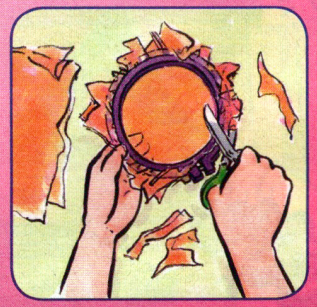
Display your jewelry and stay organized with this clever craft.

YOU WILL NEED

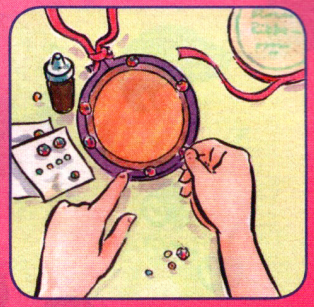
- A plastic embroidery hoop of any size
- Scissors
- 1 yard tulle fabric (pronounced TOOL)
- 2 feet of ribbon or cord
- Glue Dots
- Decorations such as rhinestones, stickers, pom-poms, etc.



1 Loosen the screw at the top of the embroidery hoop. Separate the 2 rings. Cut 3 pieces of tulle a few inches larger than the rings.



2 Sandwich the tulle pieces in between the two rings. Press the smaller ring into the larger ring and tighten the screw. Trim the excess tulle by cutting as close as you can to the edge of the embroidery hoop.



3 Loop a ribbon through the space between the hoop and the screw and knot the ends. Use Glue Dots to attach rhinestones or other themed decorations to the front. Hook earrings through the tulle and secure them on the back. ★

Illustrations: Shawn Banner



Sweet Treat

Animal Lover

Contest Winners

Last May, we invited you to write a story that included one of the following: a pair of magic dance shoes; a team that never wins; a record-breaking snowstorm; or an anonymous valentine. From the more than 1,000 entries, we picked these two winners!

Carly and the Kickers

Carly discovers that a losing team isn't made up of losers.

by Maura A.

"Heads up, Carly!" yells my teammate Amelia. Just in time, I duck my head and barely avoid the flying soccer ball that hits the wall and bounces back to Noelle.

It's not that I'm afraid of the ball. But Amelia kicks with all her might, even if she's not so great with her aim.

"Girls, come in!" calls Coach. I feel a little sorry for him. He used to play pro soccer, and now he coaches us, the Kickers, the only team in our division that hasn't won a game yet.

I love playing soccer. And our team's got a lot of spirit, that's for sure. Even though all of us on the team are the best of friends, it doesn't make us better players. Most of the time, we're lucky if we get one goal in a game.

"All right, good work today, everybody," Coach says. "And remember that we're playing the Panthers this coming Saturday. It's our last game of the year!"

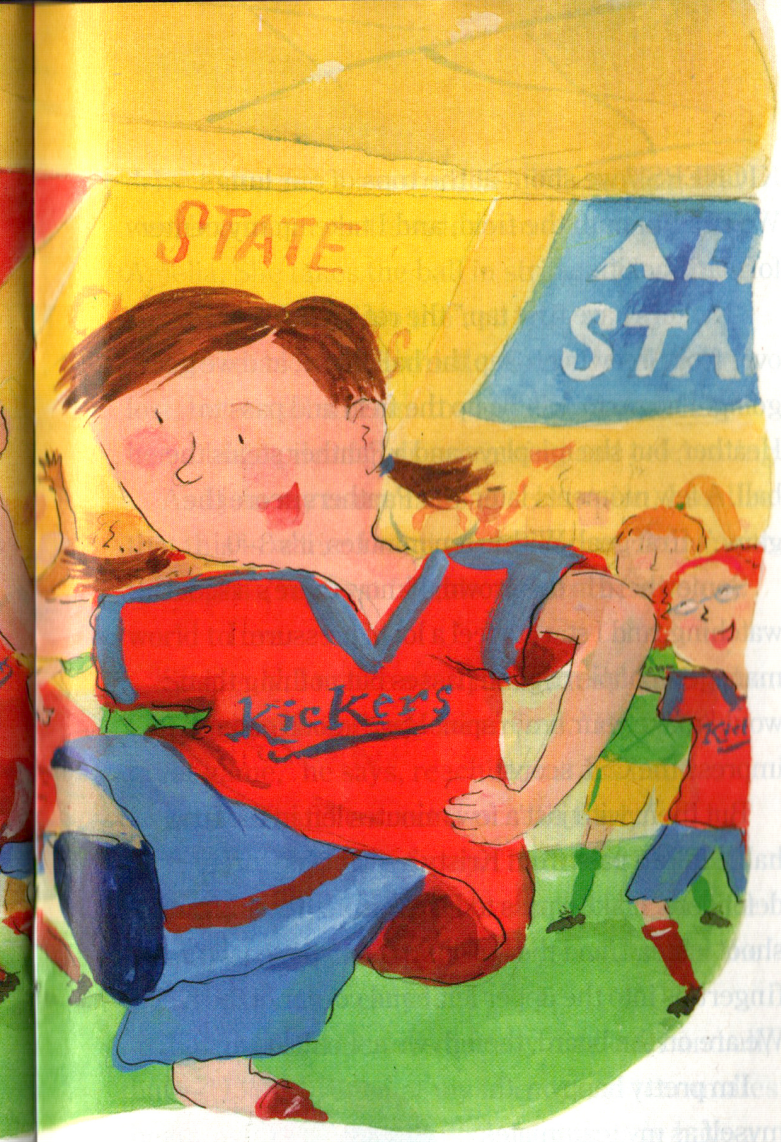
I am walking toward the locker room when I hear, "Carly?" I turn.

"Yeah, Coach?"

"Could you please come here?"

I walk over to him. He continues, "Carly, you know you're a good player."

With hesitation, I nod, wondering what he's about to tell me.



"You know the Capital League?"

Excitedly, I say, "Oh yeah! That's the best soccer league in the whole state! But they only take girls who are really good."

"Well, as I said, you're good. And I don't want to limit you to the Kickers."

"But I love the Kickers!" I insist.

"I know you do, Carly," he says. "But you really shouldn't be on this team. Your skills are higher than anyone else's out here."

Huh? What's he saying? I shouldn't be on the Kickers? I must look puzzled, because Coach tries to explain.

"What I'm trying to tell you, Carly, is that you belong in a better soccer league, one where you can use your skills more and learn more."

"So…"

"So, a scout from the Capital League is coming to see you at this Saturday's game against the Panthers."

"ME?" I ask, shocked.

"Yes, you. And I don't want to scare you, but they've come here before and I guess they liked what they saw. You're one of six, Carly, *six*, that they are scouting to play for their team. Next year, you could be playing there."

"Thanks…," I say, my voice trailing. "Thanks, Coach."

"Good luck," he says. "Not that you'll need it."

As soon as I get home, I call my best friend, Genna. She's on the Kickers, too.



"You might play for the CSL?"(CSL is the Capital Soccer League.)

"Yes!" I squeal.

"Whoa, Carly!" says Genna. "You are so lucky!"



"Yeah, I can't believe it," I say.

Sounding a bit sad, Genna says, "It just won't be the same without you."

I feel myself starting to drift off in thought.

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

I wonder if playing for the CSL is all that it's made out to be. The girls on the Kickers have been my best friends forever. Could I really turn my back on them? Martha Johnsington used to play on my youth league team, but then she joined the CSL and never hung out with us again. Would that happen to me? No, no, that won't happen. I won't let it…

I lie down on my bed and try to stop thinking about it, forgetting that Genna is still hanging on the phone. "Carly! Carly, are you there?" she asks.

Game Day. Since my phone call with Genna two nights ago, my friends have been so excited about me maybe joining the CSL. I told Genna not to say anything until the news was official, but yesterday morning my locker was decorated with posters that have "Congratulations" on them and the CSL logo expertly drawn by Daphne, our resident team artist.

I am off in my own world and barely hear Coach call us together. Everyone yells my name, and I run over to join my team. After a talk about strategy, Coach asks, "Ready, girls?" A chorus of energized "Yeahs!" erupts from my teammates. "One, two, three…



KICKERS!" we shout at the tops of our lungs. We run out onto the field, and I take up my center forward position.

"Kickers have first tap," the ref says. Alicia comes over from left wing to tap the ball to me, and we get going. I begin to dribble up the field and pass to Heather, but she misplays and a Panther steals the ball. A few moments later, the Panthers score the game's first goal. Within ten minutes, it's 3–0.

Somewhere in the crowd, I know there's a scout watching, and I start to feel a lot of pressure. I manage a couple of good passes but nothing that would make your brain spin. Have I done enough to impress the CSL scout?

But then, with just a few minutes left in the first half, I take a pass from Kristy and go past three defenders. I fake a pass to Daphne on the wing but shoot instead, and the ball just passes the goalie's fingertips into the upper left-hand corner of the net. We are on the board, though we are still losing 5–1.

I'm pretty happy with myself as my teammates congratulate me. Then I notice tears in my eyes. I never cry—never—but I love these girls, and this might be my last game as a Kicker.



It's the second half. I take a quick pass from Genna, and two defenders run toward me, believing that I am the only threat to score. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Amelia wide open on the wing. I smile.

I move right, pretending that I am going to

drive to the net. I get the defenders moving that way, leaving my path wide open for a pass to Amelia. She takes the ball in stride, and without stopping, it soars into the net.

The ref blows the whistle. Game over! We've lost, but we all still run toward Amelia and hug her, a huge pile of girls screaming and celebrating.

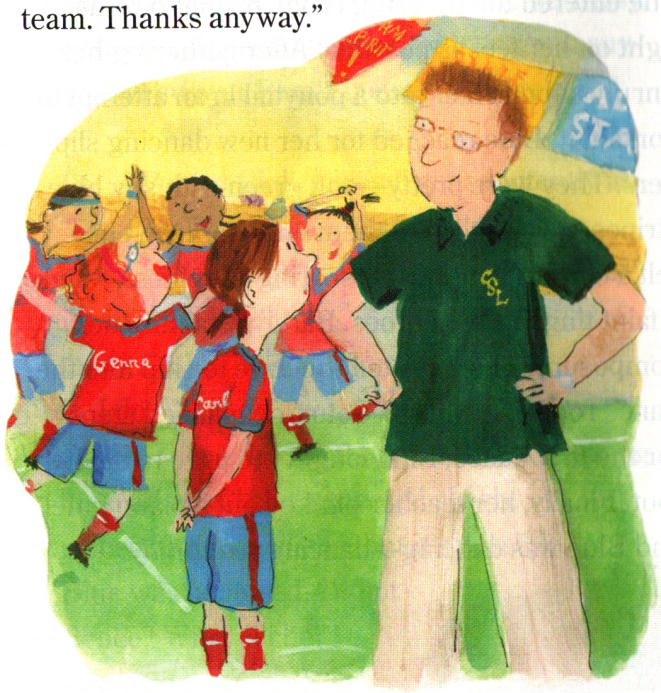
As I join my teammates in celebration, I realize that this is where I want to play soccer. Being with these girls, my best friends, means the whole world to me.

Suddenly, I notice a tall man in a shirt with the CSL logo on it walking toward me. "Hi, Callie, great game," he says, reaching out his hand.

I shake it and correct him. "It's Carly."

"Sorry...Carly. I'm Joseph Kemley from the Capital Soccer League. I have to tell you, we like what we see in you. I hope that you will make the CSL your home next year."

"Uh, Mr. Kemley, it's a really nice offer and all, but—" I look around at my friends and teammates, beaming after Amelia's goal. "—I already have a team. Thanks anyway."



He seems surprised but smiles. "I can understand that, but if you ever change your mind, let me know, O.K.?"

"I will," I say, knowing that it will never happen.

I rejoin my teammates. Genna says, "How about going out for pizza and celebrating Amelia's goal and Carly making the CSL?"

"Why would I join the CSL?" I ask. "I already have a soccer team!"

With looks of shock on their faces, the girls all break into huge grins and give me tight hugs. I look around and think, *We've never won a game, but you know what? We're a team. I could never leave this!* ★



Meet the Author



Maura A.

I love writing stories! "Carly and the Kickers" is my favorite story I've written. When I played soccer, I liked being the goalie. I wasn't a star player like Carly, but I can relate to her friendships.

Maura, age 11, lives in Pennsylvania.



Fro

Blue Jennings was the unluckiest person in the world. At least, that's what the kids at her middle school thought. Blue didn't have a natural talent for anything. She had tried every elective under the sun, every extracurricular activity in the Milky Way, and every competitive sport in space. Things always ended the same way—in spectacular failure. So one day, when Blue walked through the door of the Irish dance studio, the other dancers moaned. Their team was sure to come in last place now.

Please don't let me mess up again, Blue thought. She entered the dressing room, trying to be as light on her feet as possible. After gathering her unruly auburn hair into a ponytail in an attempt to contain it, Blue reached for her new dancing slippers. They were pretty—soft green with sky blue stripes. As she slipped them onto her feet, she felt a curious sensation—soaring happiness—and a faint tingling in her toes. Barely retaining her composure, Blue resisted the urge to skip into the dance room. As Miss O'Connor explained steps for the first dance, Blue fought the urge to tap her foot. Finally, her teacher plinked out a piano tune, and Blue was dancing—dancing *beautifully.*

Dance

by Lily B.

Blue Jennings thinks she is cursed. Can she ever break the spell and discover the magic inside herself?

An hour later, the lesson was over and Blue's toes hadn't stopped tingling. Miss O'Connor had pronounced Blue a "natural" as she flew through the dances with remarkable ease. But as Blue removed her slippers, she looked at them closely. Her feeling of elation disappeared as quickly as it had come. She must have been dreaming. She had never been good at anything, let alone a "natural." Then, as she stared at the slippers in her hands, a theory came to her. A crazy theory. An impossible theory. Blue shook her head, trying to clear it. She had to get to her Poetry Club meeting. She had something to discuss with her best friend, Daisy, who was the finest fantasy writer in town. If anyone could answer Blue's question, Daisy could.

At Poetry Club, Daisy listened intently as Blue hurriedly whispered in her ear.

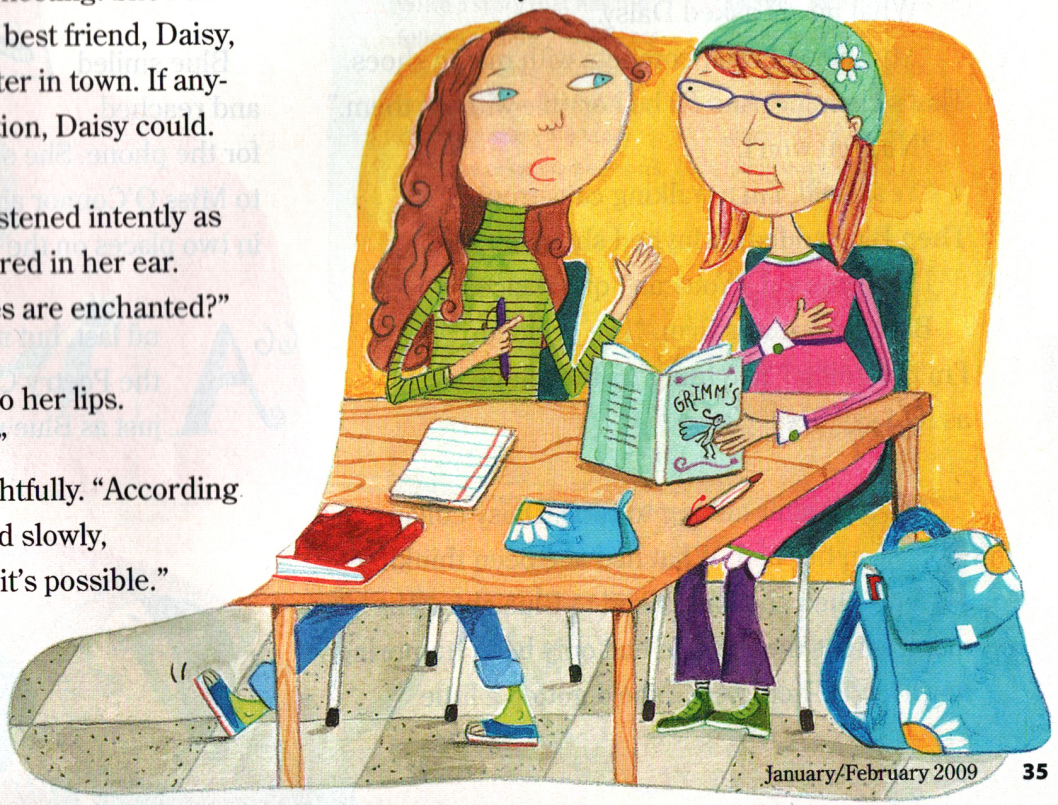
"You think the shoes are enchanted?" Daisy blurted loudly.

"*Shhh!*" Blue held a finger to her lips. "Yes, I do. What do *you* think?"

Daisy's face crinkled thoughtfully. "According to the evidence," she answered slowly, "it's possible. It's a cliché, but it's possible."

Blue was confused. "What evidence? What cliché?" she inquired.

"Well, it's common knowledge to the avid fairy-tale reader that three of the most frequently occurring elements in fantasy stories are enchanted princesses, enchanted princes, and enchanted shoes. Given the evidence—" Daisy paused and held up her copy of *Grimm's Fairy Tales,* "—there's no reason your dance slippers can't be magic, especially compared with the possibility of a prince turning into a frog." She began scribbling in her math notebook. "See, if you ratio magic shoes to amphibian royalty, your odds are…aha!" Daisy exclaimed. "Two to one!"



Illustrations: Céline Malépart

Blue was shocked that there would even be a possibility that she was the owner of enchanted shoes, but Daisy *was* the fairy-tale expert.

A week later, Miss O'Connor had big news at dance rehearsal.

"The Valentine's Day Dance-Off approaches!" she announced. "The event will be held on Saturday the 14th in Springfield."

The girls started murmuring excitedly, except for Blue, who suddenly looked worried.

As soon as she got home, Blue snatched up the phone and hit speed dial.



"Daisy, I have a Poetry Club contest and a dance-off in Springfield on the same day—Valentine's Day!"

"And Springfield is two hours away!" Daisy agonized. Even Daisy couldn't figure out how Blue could be in two places at once.

"And I've got another emergency."

"What now?" asked Daisy.

"My shoes! I can't compete with magic shoes. That's cheating. And I'll be horrible without them."

"No, you won't."

"Yes, I will! I'm a walking catastrophe!" Then Blue added, "Maybe I shouldn't go."

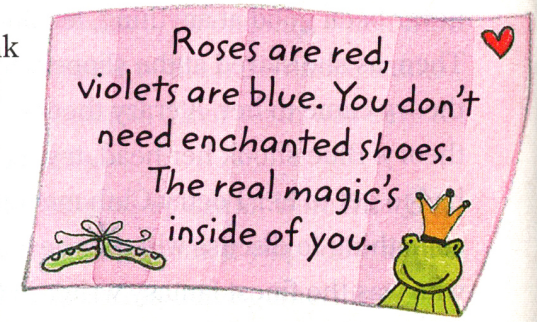
Daisy gasped. "You can't quit dance!"

Blue's voice was firm. "I've decided. I'm not going." She hung up the phone as if to say: *End of story.*

Right after talking to Blue, Daisy collapsed on her bed. What had she been thinking? When she had talked to Blue about the magic shoes theory, she had only been humoring her friend. Then, well…she'd gotten a little carried away with the frog-prince ratio stuff. Daisy knew that Blue was truly talented. Dancing was in her heart. Blue just wasn't used to being good at things. And now, because of that, she was going to give up!

Think, Daisy, think! Daisy willed herself to have a moment of genius. And it came. But the timing had to be just right. Daisy leaped off her bed and ran to find her art supplies.

Friday, February 13—Let the record show that Blue Jennings fails again, Blue thought dully as she searched in her backpack for her math folder. She'd called Miss O'Connor to say she was quitting dance. Not just the competition, but her lessons, too. She was officially done with Irish dancing. She opened her homework assignment. Something pink and purple fell onto her desk. It read:



Blue smiled and reached for the phone. She suddenly wanted to talk to Miss O'Connor about how she *could* be in two places on the same day.

"And last, but not least, Blue Jennings!" the Poetry Club contest judge read out just as Blue rushed onto the stage.



After competing at the dance-off, Blue had just made it. "My poem is titled 'FROG DANCE,'" Blue announced to the crowd. She began to read:

A friend is like a fairy tale.
Each has a different theme.

Some are writers of stories;
some are dreamers of dreams.

Some are like a slipper, delicate as glass.

Some are rather froggish,
lacking grace and class.

Still others dream of stories
and dance on green webbed feet,

Encouraging you to chase your dreams
and never accept defeat.

Blue searched for a certain face in the cheering crowd. As Daisy pushed her way into view, Blue held up a first-place dancing ribbon. ★

Meet the Author



Lily B.

I am crazy for writing! I also especially love reading fairy tales. When I write, I like to disappear into my characters. For this story, I imagined myself to be like Daisy. I also modeled Daisy after my friends, because Daisy is such a good friend to Blue.

Lily, age 12, lives in Michigan.

Honorable Mentions

Jessica H.
Age 12, Washington

Zoe C.
Age 11, Ohio

Melissa H.
Age 14, North Carolina

Charlotte B.
Age 13, South Carolina

Lauren F.
Age 8, Maryland

Courtney Z.
Age 12, Iowa

New Contest!

It's time for another story contest. Here are the rules:

1. Write a story that has the following title: "The Dress Disaster." Give your story an autumn setting. All characters in your story must be original creations.
2. Your story shouldn't be longer than four handwritten pages or three typed pages (1,200 words).
3. Include your first and last name, address, phone number, school photo, and birth date. You and your parent must sign your story, stating that you made it up.
4. Mail your story to the address on page 7 by February 10, 2009. Winners will appear in the September/October 2009 issue.



It's our new puzzle section!

Puzzle Palooza

M is for Mindbender

Each of the words in this crossword starts with the letter M. Enjoy making marvelous marks!









Illustrations: Karen Wolcott

Across

1. The largest amount allowed
4. Not first, not last, but in the _____
5. Way more than a few—lots and lots
6. Hot chocolate is served in this
9. Dirt plus water
10. _____ and cheese
11. A dog that's not a specific breed
12. What chocolate might do on a warm day
14. Find your letters in this
15. You might run this far in gym
16. What drummers do in a parade
17. One song made up of parts of other songs
18. The sound a cat makes



Down

1. Another word for jolly or happy
2. Tiny
3. July and October, for example
4. Short for "mother"
5. A wizard performs this
6. A school subject
7. Leads you to the treasure
8. A person who acts but doesn't speak
9. Clothes and fast food are sold here
10. Heats food quickly
11. When your room is like this, you clean it
13. That's not yours, it's _____
15. Pour this on your cereal
16. Slump around in a sad mood



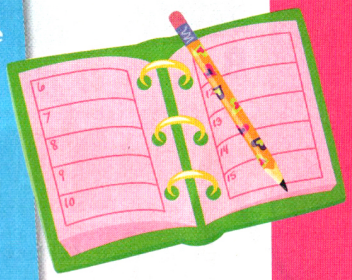
Build-a-Word

Each of these paragraphs is missing several words. Figure out the first missing word. Then use that word's letters plus one extra letter—rearranging the letters if needed—to make the next word.

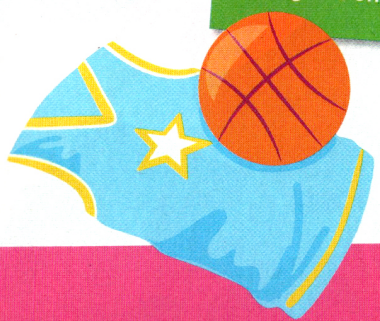
example

"This is **a** disaster!" Cora insisted. "I auditioned **at** that new theater, and I got cast. But we all have to **act** with a bunch of **cats** running around onstage! I'm allergic! I can't do this role—but it's not as if I have a **stack** of other offers waiting."

1. Maya sat down to do her homework. At the top of the page in her planner, she'd written a note to herself, right where she'd be sure to spot it. "List your favorite sport to play," it read, "and the names of your favorite athletes. Then design a poster to present to the class. Due Monday."



2. "I can't believe it," Carrie exclaimed. "Is Ethan crazy? His game starts in two hours, and he left his lucky blue T-shirt in his locker. But the game isn't even on this side of town. There is no way that he'll be able to go back to school, get the shirt from his locker, and still get to the game on time."

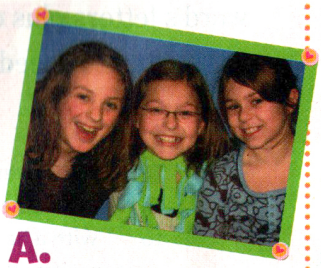


Send your fun photos to the address on page 7.

Photo Fun

Check out the blurry photo. Which shot of Michigan readers Kate, Lauren, and Emily is its match?





A.



B.



C.

A Little Riddle

Why are 2009 pennies worth more than 2008 pennies?





Can U C It?

These puzzles are designed to trick your eyes. Don't be surprised if you can't easily find the hidden letters.



How Old?

Figure out the pattern to these friends' names and ages. How old is Janie?



TOP SECRET!

Code-Cracker



Solve this puzzle using the clues given. It was sent to us by MiKaela W. The Illinois reader is this issue's Puzzle Pal.

M	i	K	a	e	l	a
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

a	g	e		l	y
8	9	10		11	12

Clues

1. The phrase gives information about the Puzzle Pal.
2. #4, #7, and #8 are the letter A.
3. #1 is M.
4. #11 and #12 are numbers—one is a 1, the other is a 2. Put them in numerical order.
5. #6 is the twelfth letter of the alphabet.
6. What do you use to unlock a door? The first letter of that word is #3.
7. #5 and #10 are the same vowel—the first vowel after A in the alphabet.
8. #9 is G.
9. #2 is the ninth letter of the alphabet.

Want to be an **AG Puzzle Pal?** Send original **puzzles, secret codes,** or **brainteasers** to the address on **page 7.**

This issue's Buzzword is... taradiddle

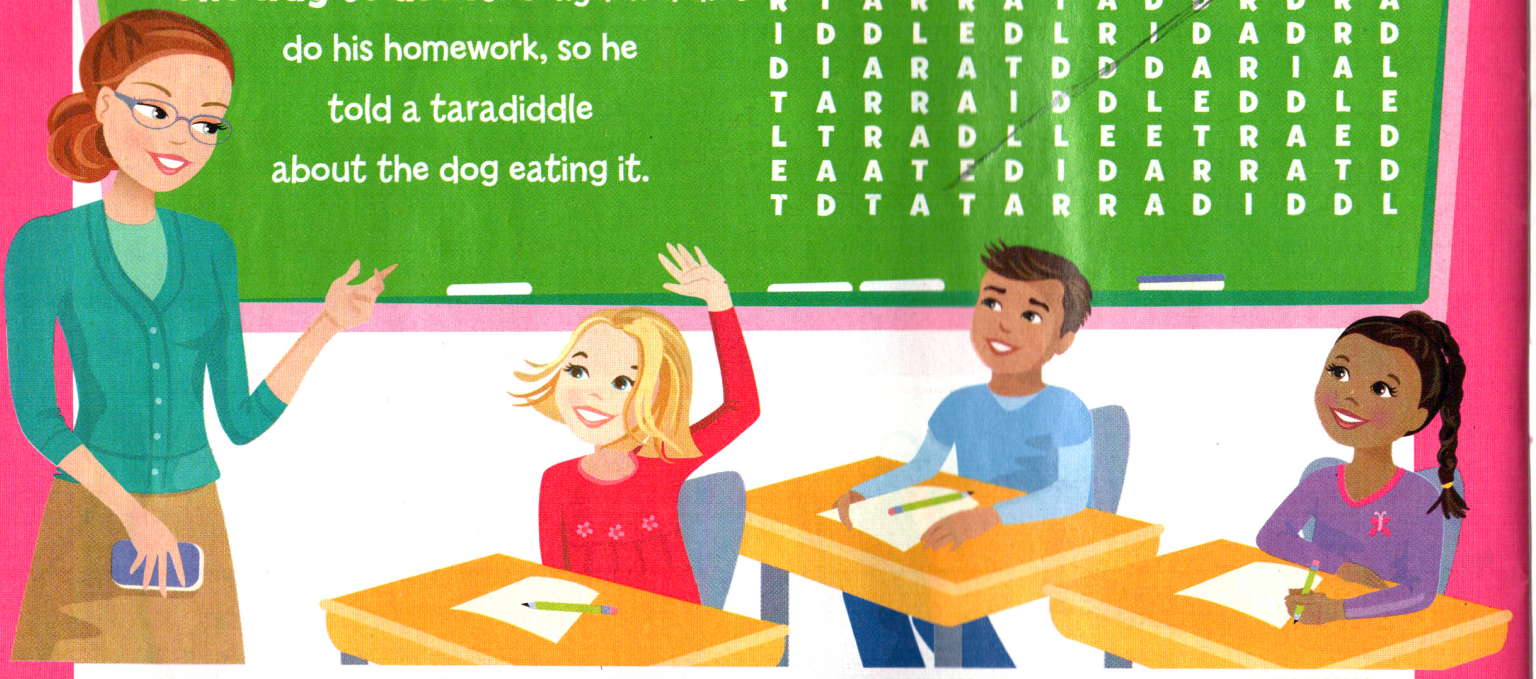
The Buzzword is hidden somewhere in this block. Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the Buzzword. **It's in there somewhere—no lie!**

T	A	R	A	D	E	L	D	A	R	A	D	I	T
T	A	R	R	A	L	R	D	T	A	R	R	A	A
A	D	A	L	T	D	A	E	L	A	T	E	T	R
R	D	T	L	A	D	T	R	I	D	A	L	A	A
R	T	A	R	R	A	I	A	D	D	R	D	R	A
I	D	D	L	E	D	L	R	I	D	A	D	R	D
D	I	A	R	A	T	D	D	D	A	R	I	A	L
T	A	R	R	A	I	D	D	L	E	D	D	L	E
L	T	R	A	D	L	L	E	E	T	R	A	E	D
E	A	A	T	E	D	I	D	A	R	R	A	T	D
T	D	T	A	T	A	R	R	A	D	I	D	D	L

How to say it: tair-uh-DID-el

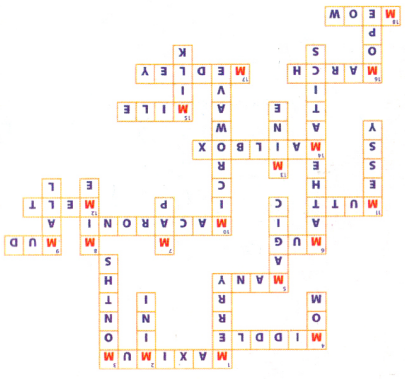
What it means: a little lie or fib

One way to use it: Grayden didn't do his homework, so he told a taradiddle about the dog eating it.



Answer Box

M is for Mindbender



Build-a-Word

1. to, top, spot, sport, poster;
2. I, is, his, this, shirt

Photo Fun

C—look closely at the edges of the photos to solve the puzzle.

A Little Riddle

2009 pennies are worth more than 2008 pennies because there's one more penny in 2,009 than 2,008.

Can U C It?

MMMMMM

How Old?

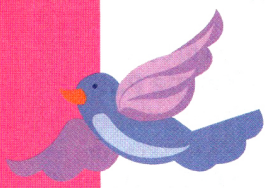
Janie is 10 because her initial, J, is the 10th letter of the alphabet, just as Kayla's initial, K, is the 11th letter, and so on.

Code-Cracker

The answer is:
MIKAELA
AGE 12

Buzzword





Illustrations: Susan McAliley



A





B



C



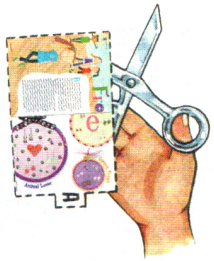


D

Mini Mag

With the Mini Mag, you can make a miniature copy of *American Girl* for your doll or stuffed animal. All you need are scissors and a stapler. Read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1 Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.



2 Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.



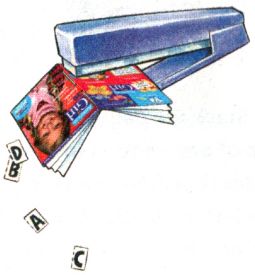
Continued

Mini Mag

3 Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the magazine should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.



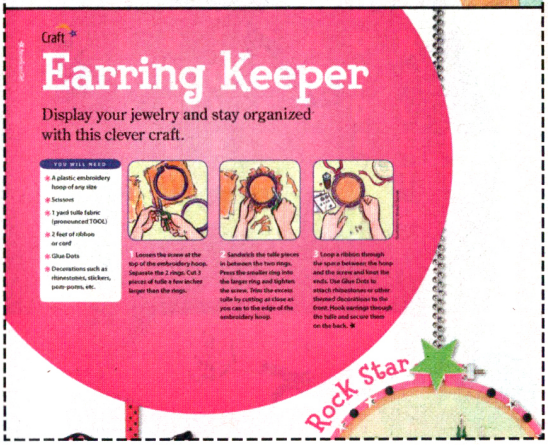
4 Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!



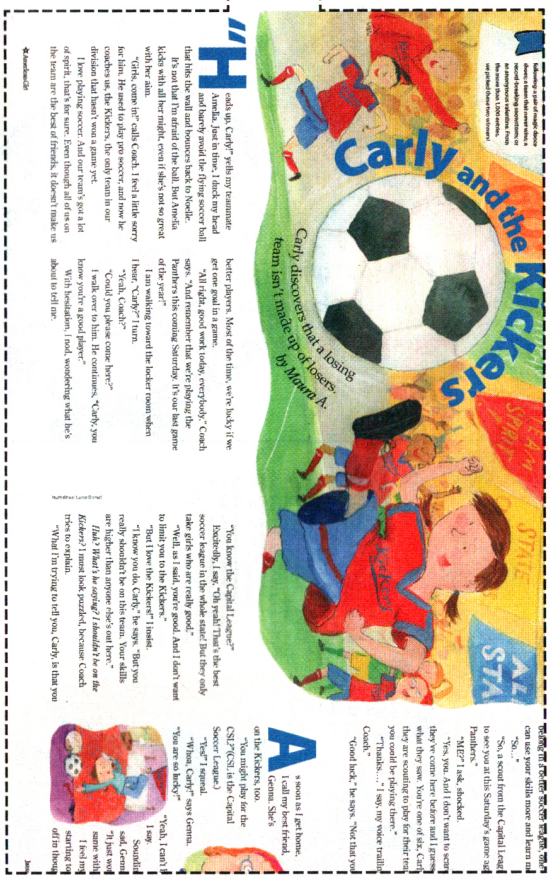


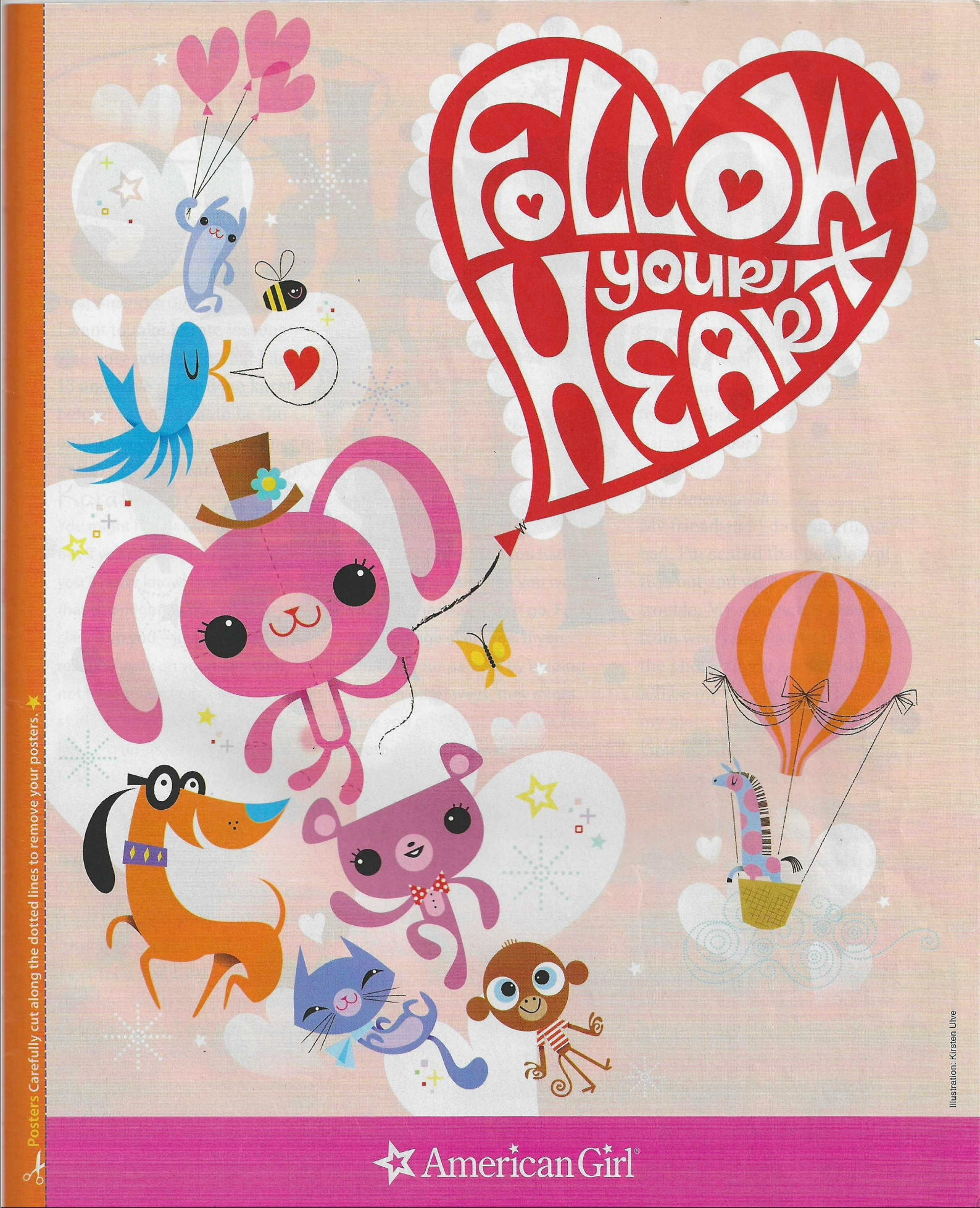












Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.

American Girl®

Illustration: Kirsten Ulve

Friends sprinkle happiness into life!



Photo: Darren K. Fisher/Shutterstock

American Girl®

HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I want to take karate lessons. The only problem is that I am 13 and have never done karate before. I don't want to be the only 13-year-old in a beginner's group full of 6-year-olds. Help!

Karate Kid?

You might have a blast doing karate, but if you don't sign up for lessons, you'll never know. Don't let the fact that you might be the oldest in the class stop you—just go to class ready to work on your own skills, not to compare yourself to the other students. It would be a shame to miss out on an activity that you'd love just because you didn't start sooner. It's not too late to start now.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My little brother's bedtime is 9:30, but my parents don't tell him to go to bed until 10:00. I get mad and I try to make it obvious that it's past his bedtime, but then I get into trouble.

Stay-Up Brother

Monitoring your brother's bedtime is your parents' job—not yours. If you're upset because you had to go to bed earlier when you were your brother's age, let it go. Family rules change over time. If you impress your parents by helping them in other ways, they might give you privileges that your little brother doesn't have.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I love to read! But I don't have any time to read because of all of my activities. I don't want to quit anything. What should I do?

Reader

Always keep a book with you so that you can read during pockets of free time. Turn some of your TV or computer time into reading time. Read for a little while right before bed, and find time to read on weekends. Also, talk to your parents about your schedule. You might not *want* to quit anything, but you might *need* to find more free time in order to have a happy balance in your life.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My friend and I did something bad. I'm scared that people will find out and we'll get into big trouble. My stomach is hurting from worry, and when I hear the phone ring, I keep thinking it'll be my friend's mom telling my mom what we did.

Going Bananas

That feeling is your conscience, and it's telling you that you need to confess what you did. Be brave and tell your parents. Even if they get upset when they hear about it from you, they would be even more upset to hear about it from your friend's mom. So pick a quiet time and say, "Mom, Dad, I need to tell you something, but I'm afraid." Then spill the beans. No matter what they say, you'll be relieved not to have this secret anymore.

Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

I have a friend who calls several times a day, every single day. I've tried making up excuses and not answering the phone. How can I tell her to stop calling and still be polite?

Frustrated Friend

Dealing with a persistent friend can be a challenge. The next time she calls, say, "I can't talk on school nights, but I'll call you this weekend." If she keeps calling every day, say, "Remember when I said I couldn't talk on school nights?" With a few reminders, your friend should get the hint.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I'm the oldest of four kids. I want to go out with my mom and have a "girls' day" like my friends do, but I'm not comfortable asking for things from my mom because I know she's very busy. What can I do?

I NEED my mom!

It's nice that you see how busy your mom is, but your relationship with her is more important. Let your mom know you miss her and would like to have some time alone with her. What you do on your girls' day isn't as important as just spending time together, so be flexible when making plans. Look for smaller ways to spend time with her every day, too. Folding laundry or making dinner together will help Mom have more free time and also give you a chance to catch up in smaller ways.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

A very sad thing just happened to my friend. I want to tell her that I'm sorry, but whenever I see her, she always acts happy. I don't want to make her sad again. What should I do?

Torn

Why not give your friend a card? Let her know that you're sorry about what she's going through, and tell her that if she wants to talk about it with you, she can. Give it to her at the end of the day or mail it to her house. That way, you can still let her know that you care without bringing up a sad subject at an awkward time. Your kindness will mean a lot to her.

★

Advice from You

"If you ever get frustrated or grumpy while you're doing your homework, just smile! Keep a mirror on your desk, and give yourself a grin every time you feel that you just can't do it. You'll feel better."

Marlee R.
Age 12, New Jersey

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

yummy

Did you notice a few changes? Check out the new section—Puzzle Palooza! That's where you'll find the Buzzword, too. Win It! is now on the Table of Contents page. And our address is on page 7 in the **new** Girls Express section. Send us a letter and tell us what you think about the changes inside AG magazine!

Sisters Jasmine and Brittany G. made the delicious desserts from the Valen-Tiny Party. Great job, girls!





Behind the Scenes

It's a new year and a new look for AG magazine!

Want to give someone a special valentine? Make a printable valentine at americangirl.com. Just click on "Fun for Girls."

sweet tooth



Big, bright eyes that shine
A smile that will make your day
I love you, sister!
Sophie, age 10, Canada

For more **haiku** contest entries, go to **"Fun for Girls"** at americangirl.com!

Find more photos and fund-raising tips from "Sisters with Heart" on **"Fun for Girls"** at americangirl.com.









Be a Super Sleuth

Look for the clues and try to solve a mystery!

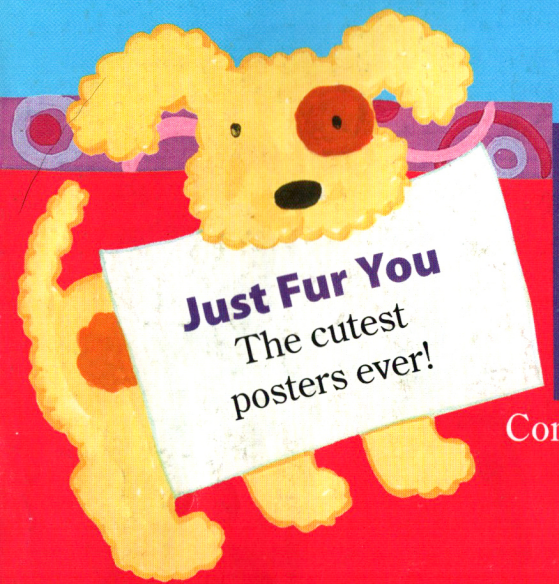


Butterfly Bonanza

See beautiful butterflies designed by girls like you.



American Girl



Just Fur You

The cutest posters ever!

Go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls" for more magazine fun!

Coming up in the March/April issue

Midnight Madness

Have a super slumber party!



Folded Flowers

Decorate your room with pretty blossoms you can make out of paper.

Girls All Over the World

You won't believe the amazing places our readers have visited.



Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

FUNNY LITTLE FORTUNES

These little fortunes are perfect for Valentine's Day or any other day!

American Girl

FUNNY LITTLE FORTUNES
American Girl

American Girl

Great Ways to Use AG's Funny Little Fortunes

1. Attach the fortunes to lollipops and read them out loud at your Valen-Tiny Party.
2. Surprise a friend at school by slipping a fortune into her locker or desk.
3. Include the fortunes with the valentine cards you pass out to your classmates.
4. Put all of the fortunes in a shoe box and set up a fortune-telling booth for your family. Draw a fortune from the box, and tell each person what lies ahead!
5. Mail a fortune to a family member or faraway friend.

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Carefully cut along the dotted lines.

Someone special will give you a small smile and brighten your day.	A tiny treat is awaiting you.
One day you will write a series of miniature books that fit in your palm.	Today you will bring a little laugh to someone who is having a bad day.
Keep a trinket in your pocket and it will bring you luck on your next test.	Do a teeny favor for someone today, and she or he will soon repay you in a big way.
A toy-sized Chihuahua is somewhere in your future.	Even if you can run only a short distance now, you will run a marathon in the future.
An itty-bitty piece of advice you receive today will help you get through a hard time.	You will have a bite-sized buffet on your next birthday.
You will open a dessert shop that sells miniature cakes and cookies.	You will learn something surprising when you take a short walk with a friend.
Your first job will be to write short and sweet sayings for greeting cards.	A baby panda at a zoo will be named after you.
The tiny collection you have now will break a world record in the future.	A little poem you wrote in school will become the chorus to a famous song in the future.
This week you will have a brief conversation with someone you haven't talked to in a long time.	A small charm you own will bring you lots of luck one day.
Someday you will design dollhouse furniture and accessories.	The small sketches you make will someday turn into your own line of clothing.
You will direct a short film that wins many awards.	A small part in the school play will lead to a starring role in the future.
A pint-sized cousin will give you a huge present for your birthday.	Next time you are afraid to try a new kind of food, take a bite—it will become your new favorite.
In the wee hours of the morning, you will dream about being a superhero.	In a short while, you will hear your favorite song on the radio.

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Carefully cut along the dotted lines.

Someone special will give you a small smile and brighten your day.	A tiny treat is awaiting you.
One day you will write a series of miniature books that fit in your palm.	Today you will bring a little laugh to someone who is having a bad day.
Keep a trinket in your pocket and it will bring you luck on your next test.	Do a teeny favor for someone today, and she or he will soon repay you in a big way.
A toy-sized Chihuahua is somewhere in your future.	Even if you can run only a short distance now, you will run a marathon in the future.
An itty-bitty piece of advice you receive today will help you get through a hard time.	You will have a bite-sized buffet on your next birthday.
You will open a dessert shop that sells miniature cakes and cookies.	You will learn something surprising when you take a short walk with a friend.
Your first job will be to write short and sweet sayings for greeting cards.	A baby panda at a zoo will be named after you.
The tiny collection you have now will break a world record in the future.	A little poem you wrote in school will become the chorus to a famous song in the future.
This week you will have a brief conversation with someone you haven't talked to in a long time.	A small charm you own will bring you lots of luck one day.
Someday you will design dollhouse furniture and accessories.	The small sketches you make will someday turn into your own line of clothing.
You will direct a short film that wins many awards.	A small part in the school play will lead to a starring role in the future.
A pint-sized cousin will give you a huge present for your birthday.	Next time you are afraid to try a new kind of food, take a bite—it will become your new favorite.
In the wee hours of the morning, you will dream about being a superhero.	In a short while, you will hear your favorite song on the radio.